

# EXHIBIT

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FORUMS | FORUM: KEN PAXTON

# Texans want reasonable voter ID



*Yesterday 6:21 p.m.*

Voter ID may not be important to the Caller-Times Editorial Board, but it is important to me, the state Legislature which passed this law, a governor who signed it, and to the overwhelming majority of Texans who believe in the integrity of our electoral process.

My office is in the process of appealing a recent Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruling to the United States Supreme Court. We are doing so because this issue is important enough to be fully adjudicated by the highest court in our land. We will also continue litigation at the district court to ensure that the law is

properly enforced.

I would suggest that the Caller-Times put aside name calling and focus on the law and the direction given to us by the courts. To be clear, the court of appeals never accused anyone of voter suppression, nor is there evidence that supports the accusation. Moreover, the court of appeals is allowing Texas to amend the law before passing final judgment on Voter ID.

In previous rulings, the Supreme Court has made clear that photo identification requirements are nondiscriminatory. The Court has explained that it is not too much to ask of voters to get photo identification. After all, the inconvenience of getting a free photo ID does not even represent a significant increase over the usual burdens of voting. Indeed, President Obama's Department of Justice, who sued Texas to block our voter ID law, never identified a single person who faced a legally substantial obstacle to voting during the dozens of elections where Texas' voter ID law was enforced — even though its lawyers crisscrossed the state, microphones in hand, searching desperately for voters who could fit their narrative.

Under the Texas voter identification law, voters must show a government-issued photo identification in order to cast their ballot. Texans who do not already have a driver's license, passport, military identification card, or other approved form of identification can get a state-issued voter identification card free of charge from the Texas Department of Public Safety. Additionally, anyone who is disabled or over age 65 can vote by mail, which allows them to use mail-in ballots without having to get a photo identification.

The Texas Legislature, of which I was a member at the time, enacted the photo voter identification law in 2011 amid

overwhelming support throughout the state. A few months before the law's passage, a poll conducted by the University of Texas and the Texas Tribune revealed that 75 percent of Texas voters agreed that voters should be required to present a government-issued photo ID to vote. The support was universal: 58 percent of Democrats, 63 percent of African-Americans, and 68 percent of Hispanics supported a voter-ID law.

We in the Legislature enacted the law to help deter and detect election fraud and to improve the public's confidence in our elections, both of which the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized as valid state interests. Indeed, even the Commission on Federal Election Reform, chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker, agrees: "The electoral system cannot inspire public confidence if no safeguards exist to deter or detect fraud or to confirm the identity of voters. Photo IDs are currently needed to board a plane, enter federal buildings, and cash a check. Voting is equally important."

Safeguarding the integrity of our elections process is essential to preserving our democracy, and our common-sense law provides simple protections to ensure our elections accurately reflect the will of the voters of Texas.

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.caller.com/opinion/forums/texans-want-reasonable-voter-id-3c52b54f-0409-7422-e053-0100007f8e1d-393329451.html>

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